

# **Iowa Grants Enterprise Management System**

## **Government Oversight Committee**

**December 17, 2007**

### **Training**

GEM\$ recently sponsored a series of eight two-day Grant Writer Workshops. These training events were held on community college campuses throughout the state. (Attachment A)

The third Iowa Grant Symposium is planned for June 3, 2008 at the Scheman Building, ISU.

### **State Agency Technical Assistance Project**

The purpose of this project is to assist state agencies with the grant identification/grant writing process, leading to self-sufficiency in the long term. (Attachment B)

The following agencies have either completed the project, are currently working through the process or are planning to participate:

- College Student Aid Commission

- Public Defense – Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division

- Corrections

- Workforce Development

- Agriculture and Land Stewardship

### **eCivis Grant Research System**

The Department of Management/GEM\$ entered into a contract with eCivis on November 1, 2007 to provide grant search tools to state agencies.

Timeline:

June 11, 2007 - RFP Issued, eCivis was the only viable vendor that responded

August 29, 2007 - eCivis demo. Thirteen state agencies attended. (Attachment C)

November 1, 2007 – Contract signed

November 29, 2007 – Training for state agencies

The annual cost of the contract is \$92,500. IDOM/GEM\$ is paying for 1/3 of the contract cost for the current contract period. State agencies are paying for the remainder of the cost with an allocation which was determined by agency size, as defined by the Department of Administrative Services Customer Councils. Small = \$1,190, Medium = \$2,140, Large = \$2,840

The contract is renewable annually for up to three additional one-year terms. State agencies will be contacted in September 2008 to determine if there's interest in renewing the contract.

### **Electronic Grant Notification Storefront and Grant Management System (e-GMS)**

E-GMS is a global attempt to simplify the grant identification and application process for state customers and provide a unified grant management approach within state government.

The proposed system will provide a grant notification Storefront to assist public and private entities seeking funding through state administered grant programs. It will also be capable of managing the grant solicitation, application, selection, award/contracting, monitoring, communications, modification, reporting, close-out, and financial management processes. Implementation of the system will significantly reduce the amount of time agencies spend on the process of awarding and managing grants, resulting in an increased focus on monitoring the status of funded projects and providing technical assistance to grantees. Another outcome will be increased grant seeking activity. Less time spent on the grant giving tasks could translate into more effort put into grant seeking.

The following agencies have agreed to pilot the system, beginning implementation in FY 2008:

- Department of Public Defense, Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division
- Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service
- Office of Drug Control Policy

The remaining grant-giving agencies will be phased in over the next 2 to 3 years.

#### **Timeline:**

May 31, 2007 – Request for Information (RFI) issued, 5 vendors responded

July 18 and 19, 2007 – Vendor demonstrations, 19 state agencies participated

August 15, 2007 – Pooled Technology application for \$500,000 presented to the Joint Chief Information Officers (JCIO). E-GMS is ranked #9 out of 20 applicants for Pooled Technology Funding.

September 12, 2007 – IOWAccess provided \$20,000 for scope and RFP development.

September 13, 2007 – Technology Governance Board approved the project

October 18 – present – RFP Development. The following agencies are collaborating on the RFP development:

- Department of Administrative Services, Information Technology Enterprise
- Department of Economic Development
- Department of Education
- Department of Public Defense, Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division
- Department of Management
- Department of Transportation
- Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service
- Iowa League of Cities
- Office of Drug Control Policy

January 4, 2008 – Projected RFP release date

February 8, 2008 – Projected RFP submission deadline

March 2008 – IOWAccess, funding request for initial implementation

2008 Legislative Session – Pooled Technology funding request presented to the Legislature



## **Attachment A**

### **Government Oversight Committee December 17, 2007**

#### **Grant Writing Workshops Report**

A series of eight two-day grant writing workshops were conducted during the fall 2007. GEM\$ endorsed the development of the workshops in response to requests for hands-on grant writing training that came from GEM\$ Grant Symposium participant evaluations.

The workshops were developed and conducted by the Iowa-based grant writing training and development consultant, L T & J Consulting—the firm conducts grant training workshops under the trade name Midwest GrantWriters Workshops.

The workshops were held at Iowa Community Colleges locations throughout the state:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
September 12 & 13	DMACC - Ankeny	57
September 18 & 19	IHCC - Ottumwa	20
September 25 & 26	EICCD - Davenport	21
October 9 & 10	NIACC - Mason City	29
October 30 & 31	HCC - Cedar Falls	30
November 6 & 7	ICCC - Fort Dodge	21
November 13 & 14	NCC - Sheldon	11
November 27 & 28	IWCC - Council Bluffs	22

- A total of 211 individuals, representing over 150 nonprofit organizations, local governments, and state agencies, participated in the eight workshops.
- Workshop content included Iowa-based funding opportunities and a session covering the Iowa Community Foundation program.
- DMACC-Ankeny immediately scheduled a second workshop set for February 13-14, 2008; NIACC-Mason City and IWCC-Council Bluffs have requested subsequent workshops and are looking at potential dates for their spring and fall 2008 schedules; and the other five workshop site coordinators indicated they are open to hosting the workshop again.
- On a scale of 1 – 5 (1=lowest, 5=highest), participants who turned in workshop evaluations consistently rated the value of the workshop in several categories an average score of over 4.

## **Attachment B**

### **Government Oversight Committee December 17, 2007**

#### **State Agency Grant Training and Technical Assistance Project**

##### **GOAL**

Assist state agencies with the grant identification/grant writing process, leading to self-sufficiency in the long term.

##### **ACTION PLAN**

Selected state agencies will participate at two levels:

1. How to Begin: A proactive approach to seeking grants.
  - The participants will learn techniques in creating a process for proactively finding and selecting grants, which will maximize the agency's mission and avoid wasting resources by pursuing the wrong grant.
  - The initial training session will be followed by technical assistance to help the agencies work through the process of identifying priorities.
  - These sessions will result in the development of a priority list of funding needs for each agency.
  - Proposed time commitment
    - One half day training session attended by all agency team members
    - As many 1/2 day consultations as are needed to complete the process.
2. Grant Identification and Grant Planning Consultation
  - Grant Technical Assistance Consultants will be available to work with the participating agencies to:
    - Help find the appropriate funding sources
    - Attend periodic meetings to assist with the grant application process

##### **AGENCY SELECTION**

Priority is given to agencies that:

- Demonstrate a strong commitment to the process – support of the director and upper level management
- Commit an agency team to follow through with all aspects of the project, as outlined in the Action Plan.

##### **PROJECT TEAM**

Kathy Mabie, Project Manager  
Iowa Grants Management Director

##### **Consultants:**

Ron Mirr  
School of Social Work  
University of Iowa

Ellen Reilly  
Curriculum Specialist  
Davenport School District

Lance Noe  
Director, Center for Professional Studies  
Drake University

LT Smith and Jill Smith  
LT&J Consulting

## **Attachment C**

### **Government Oversight Committee December 17, 2007**

#### **eCivis Demo – Agency Comments**

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Strengths include: web-based, timely, rich information in succinct and consistent format, inclusive, reasonably priced, and can be configured to meet multiple needs—impressive.

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I was very impressed with the capabilities of eCivis. I would support the state using a system like this. I can see our Bureau using this to find more grants (to support our operation) and to assist local fire department (for grants for apparatus, equipment, and fire station construction).

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I think it is a wonderful product. Will be very helpful.

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I haven't finished putting together my thoughts yet, but just as an overall comment, I really liked what I saw. My reservations about it were addressed, and there are advantages I never would have thought of. The demonstration was valuable!

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I think the eCivis grants research product would be very useful based on the presentation yesterday. I like the fact that they are reviewing about 1500 Web sites daily and have a staff of about 20 people researching grant opportunities. It looks like it does an excellent job of helping the user get concise information about the federal grants and national level foundation grants that apply to their organization in a timely manner. Grant coordination is only a small portion of my responsibilities, but currently of that time most of the time is consumed with seeking information about grant possibilities and sifting through the possibilities. I also like the fact that they contact the project officer of the grant programs for additional information and where possible have copies of past successful grant applications for that particular program. The project officer can provide some useful insight. Occasionally I visit with them on my own, but this information would be useful also. Sometimes on my own, I track down copies of previous successful grants from similar agencies around the country---but having eCivis provide them would make it much easier to acquire these in a timely manner.

Finding out about federal grant opportunities is very complex, and I think eCivis looks like it does a good job of simplifying this process. It could be a powerful tool for us because we don't have the grant research resources that eCivis is bringing to the table.

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I thought the product was good and would be useful to us. For the most part we are already doing everything the system does though not as efficiently.

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Great demo, engagingly presented info, lots of detail, product looks very easy to use. Our director was wanting to develop a position to do what this product will do--what a huge savings! I do not see a downside to this and personally would highly recommend that the state go for the product asap.

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I think it would be a good investment for the State. I like all the research that goes into their product, rather than just links to grant resources --will save a ton of time for serious grant seekers and perhaps help agencies who have less experience get going.

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I was very impressed with the product for the following reasons:

- The research takes most of the guesswork out of identifying what the funder really wants.
- Presents more opportunities to seek grant funding - much that was previously unknown.
- Help streamline proposal development. Many of our agencies have multiple unmet needs. The increase in funding opportunities could help in finding the resources to meet those needs. This would help the grant writing process as we frequently try to "shove" a need into the funding opportunity or have difficulty narrowing down the grant proposal because the need is so great.
- Shorten the time all around and
- Increase the chances of getting the funding.
- Offers great future opportunities.

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Thank you for providing us the opportunity to view this software demo. The demo just wet my lips (so to speak) enough to want this product NOW.

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I was quite impressed by the demonstration yesterday. I have taken some time today to talk to a couple of people within DCI who do work with grants and they both felt it would be a beneficial product for us, at least for a trial run. I liked what I saw with the software, particularly the notification feature

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I was positively impressed by the demonstration. I don't have any experience with applying for or managing grants so it was all new and exciting for me. However my work area has some definite needs that are not being met by our current funding levels so I am planning to pursue grants. This software would definitely be useful for identifying funding sources for an inexperienced person such as myself.

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The three presenters from eCivis did an excellent job demonstrating their product, Grants Network: Research 4.0 and the system's capacities. Some features of the web-based system that appear to be especially of interest and applicable to the grant seeking efforts of the Department of Human Services (DHS) include:

- Search features that can narrow the search to Federal and Foundation grants that state government agencies are eligible to apply for
- A centralized place to search Foundation grant opportunities
- Summarized information about the each grant opportunity, which should make it quicker and easier for DHS to decide if a grant opportunity is a good fit with our mission and worth pursuing
- Critical "inside" information -
  - eCivis researches and makes available information from the grant-issuing (program) officers and summarizes suggestions, tips, and guidance information
  - They also collect and provide "point and click" access to a library of previously successful grant applications for re-occurring RFPs and RFAs. Knowing what proposals or applications have been successful in the past can help us to write better applications.
  - They track pending Federal legislation and provide early information on likely grant opportunities, even before they are officially published by the Federal granting agency. This early information can be helpful in our planning and preparation.
- The system appears to be easy to use and provides for unlimited within-agency users -- all under the same executive branch membership/license.